Transcript of Digital Storytelling as told by Jolandra White

**Slide 1**: Music plays “*Brandi Carlile: The story”*

**Slide 2**: Storytelling is a modern day version of the stories that have been passed around from generation to generation. “Digital Storytelling is the modern expression of the ancient art of storytelling. Digital stories derive their power by weaving images, music, narrative and voice together, thereby giving deep dimension and vivid color to characters, situations, experiences, and insights” (Leslie Rule, Digital storytelling Association).

**Slide 3**: New innovations go through four basic stages. Stage 1 is the need. A new innovation is introduced because of a need. The problem or need that gave rise to digital storytelling came “from a grassroots movement that uses new digital tools to help ordinary people tell their own true stories in a compelling and emotional engaging form” (Wikipedia, 2009).

**Slide 4**: Once a need was established, digital storytelling was born. Stage 2 is the research. The research tells us that some self-described “digital storytellers include Joe Lambert, Dana Atchley, Massimo Don, Massimo Laurel, and Massimo Meyer” (Wikipedia, 2009). Two of these artists went on to do more. “Digital storytelling has its roots in the American community theatre movement, emerging in California in the late eighties through the collaboration of performing artist Dana Atchley and actor Joe Lambert” (Tucker, 2006, p. 54).

**Slide 5**: Stage three is the development. As digital storytelling developed, problems began to occur. The biggest problem found was the available technology. “Across Queensland, research by the Institute of Creative Industries at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) is showing that the uptake of computer use there is currently being affected by the digital divide” (Tucker, 2006, p. 54). This division in technology allowed others to use the technology while the others were denied this use due to financial restraints. The original intended audience for digital storytelling was all people in society not the individual. It was a method for individuals to tell others their story.

**Slide 6**: Now that digital storytelling has been established, it has to be spread to the intended audience . . . the world. Digital Storytelling is produced through workshops, in-class training, websites and the Center for Digital Storytelling.

**Slide 7**: "Digital storytelling begins with the notion that in the not too distant future, sharing one's story through multiple medium of imagery, text, voice, sound, music, video and animation will be the principal hobby of the world's people." - Joe Lambert, co-founder of the Center for Digital Story Telling

**Slide 8**: The Innovation-Decision process is the chronological order of how innovations progress and develop. This process begins with knowledge. Digital storytelling began in 1986. After viewing a production, Dana Atchley, local video producer, meets Joe Lambert, co-founder and executive director of the new Life On The Water Theater Company in San Francisco, California (Center for Digital Storytelling). A couple of years later, Atchley and Lambert collaborate to develop Atchley’s *Next Exit, an interactive theoretical performance.* This development occurred from 1988 until 1990. Click on the picture to view Atchley’s *Next Exit.*

**Slide 9**: The next step in the Innovation-Development process is persuasion. In 1993, “Joe assists Dana in teaching three ‘digital storytelling workshops’ for documentary filmmakers, at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles, California” (Center for Digital Storytelling). These workshops were just the beginning of Atchley’s and Lambert’s method of persuading others to use this innovation.

**Slide 10**: The next step in the Innovation-Development process is the decision. In 1993, “Dana and Joe launch the ‘Digital Diner’ new media salons, which become a central point for dialogue among Bay Area new media producers” (Center for Digital Storytelling). This was the beginning of the turning point when others began to embrace this innovation.

**Slide 11**: The next step is implementation. From 1994 to 1998, Atchley and Lambert along with Nina Mullen created “Life on the Water”, the ‘Home Movies’ digital storytelling workshops which led to the founding of the San Francisco Digital Media Center (Center for Digital Storytelling).

**Slide 12**: The last step of the Innovation-Decision process is confirmation. This means digital storytelling has now been accepted by society. Two examples of confirmation occurred as following: In 1994, “The SFDMC undertakes collaborations with numerous organizations in England, Germany, and Denmark and is featured in stories about digital storytelling on CNN and MSNBC, as well as in countless print and online articles” (Center for Digital Storytelling). In 1996, “With support from Apple Computer, the SFDMC publishes the first version of the *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*, outlining the ‘Seven Elements’ of digital storytelling and offering hands-on production tutorials” (Center for Digital Storytelling). To view more information, click on the cookbook image.

**Slide 13**: According to Rogers (2003), the S-shaped curve of adoption is the normal curve that “accelerates to a maximum until half of the individuals on the systems have adopted. Then it increases at a gradually slower rate as fewer and fewer remaining individuals adopt the innovation” (p. 272).

**Slide 14**: The graph presents the dates of adoption by various organizations over time. The data reveals the adoption of Digital Storytelling does not fit the norm but does slowly increase over time. Some organizations adopted this innovation at the same time.

**Slide 15**: New innovations are adopted at different rates. Though being adopted by the Arts early on, digital storytelling was slow to be adopted by some educational environment. There are several levels of adopters of innovations: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

**Slide 16**: The innovators of digital storytelling were Dan Atchley and Joe Lambert. Innovators are “venturesome”. They first developed and taught digital storytelling workshops for filmmakers. They also founded the San Francisco Digital Media Center (SFDMC). They later began to train organizations on digital storytelling facilitation. And finally they began to collaborate internationally. Like all innovators, they were enthusiastic about their innovation.

**Slide 17**: Early adopters are respected. Atchley’s and Lambert’s work led to many early adopters. As founders of the San Francisco Digital Media Center (SFDMC), they took their ideas and spread them to the world. “The SFDMC relocates to the University of California at Berkeley's School of Education, becoming the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS)” (CDS, 2009, ¶ 11) CDS lead the way for digital storytelling adoption. “CDS begins training educational organizations throughout the United States, introducing digital storytelling methods to ongoing dialogues about technology in the K-12 education context” (¶ 13). “Colleagues like Bernajean Porter, Alan November, Mark Stanley, and Jason Ohler develop various curricular materials and author numerous publications about digital storytelling as a pedagogical strategy” (¶ 13) .

**Slide 18**: The early majority began at the collegiate level. The early majority are “deliberate”. They “adopt new ideas just before the average member of a system” (Rogers, 2003, p. 283). Community colleges in San Francisco began digital storytelling programs. Apple Computer and Adobe Systems developed digital storytelling curricula. Fortune 500 leaders like Hewlett Packard, Ford, and Proctor and Gamble in the United States and Tryg Baltica in Copenhagen attended digital storytelling workshops. (CDS, 2009)

**Slide 19**: Late majority are considered “skeptical”. However, many organizations began to see the benefits of digital storytelling. As a result, CDS is asked by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to lead workshops for 24 recipients of Kellogg grants in the "Managing Information in Rural America" program, the first large-scale nonprofit community development digital storytelling initiative in the United States. This work leads to digital storytelling projects at the Llano Grande Center in Texas and at Appalshop in Kentucky, as well as to the hiring of Thenmozhi Soundararajan as CDS Community Programs Director and Caleb Paull as CDS Education Director.  (CDS, 2009, ¶ 16) CDS offers the first of what will become an annual presentation at the New Media Consortium (NMC) Conference, which leads to innumerable workshops at colleges and universities in the United States, including Williams College, Pasadena Community College, Ohio State University, California State University at Monterey, University of Maryland, Maricopa County College, University of Arizona, Tulane University, Southern Illinois University, University of Wisconsin, and Middlebury College, among others. This work firmly establishes digital storytelling in the world of higher education. (CDS, 2009, ¶ 17)

**Slide 20**: Once digital storytelling was adopted by the late majority, it reached its critical mass. The critical mass “occurs at the point at which enough individuals in a system have adopted an innovation so that the innovation’s further rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining” (Rogers, 2003, p. 344). Critical mass was reached for digital storytelling in 1999 when the demand for CDS annual workshops and training was requested nationally and internationally. (CDS, 2009)

**Slide 21**: The final groups that generally adopt innovations are called laggards. Laggards are considered “traditional”. “Laggards are the last in a social system to adopt an innovation” (Rogers, 2003, p. 284). The K-12 educational organizations did not embrace digital storytelling from initial introduction in 1998. It takes on-going training and support to convince them to adopt. In “2006, CDS initiates its ‘Workshop for Educators’, to prepare K-12 teachers and technology staff to lead classroom-based digital storytelling efforts with students” (CDS, 2009, ¶ 59).

**Slide 22**: The K-12 educational environment was not without reason to be slow to adopt this innovation. It is important to examine the perceived attributes of this innovation. Complexity, “the degree to which an innovation is perceived as difficult to understand or use” (Rogers, 2003, p. 16), plays an important role in digital storytelling adoption. Educators do not need complex tools or concepts when teaching students. This may account for the delay in adoption. However, over the years tools have been invented to create digital stories that are easier to use. Some examples include Microsoft Photo Story, Apple iMovie, and Windows Moviemaker.

**Slide 23**: In addition, Observability, “the degree to which the results of an innovation are visible to others” (Rogers, 2003, p. 16), describes how digital storytelling should be analyzed. When skeptics see digital storytelling being utilized, they are more accepting and willing to try it for themselves.

**Slide 24**: Now that we have analyzed some of the perceived attributes, let’s explore the decentralized diffusion process. Decentralized diffusion occurs when “innovations originate from numerous local sources and then evolve as they diffuse via horizontal networks” (Rogers, 2003, p. 395). In the K-12 educational organization, digital storytelling would best be diffused through a decentralized diffusion system. With the k-12 system being divided into different areas (elementary, middle, and high), each may diffuse differently based on usage, adaptation and need.

**Slide 25**: Key change agents are important in this process. “A change agent is an individual who influenced clients’ innovation-decisions in a direction deemed desirable” (Rogers, 2003, p. 366). Key change agents may include classroom teachers, media specialist, instructional leaders, administrators or school policy personnel who have adopted digital storytelling into the curriculum. These are adopters would have great influence on others, in this system, to adopt digital storytelling. Rogers (2003) noted, “In many cases, adopters serve as their own change agents in diffusing their innovation to others” (p. 395).

**Slide 26**: Digital storytelling has many benefits to education. It starts with telling a story and goes until every story is heard. Christine Paradise (2008) said, “Children see things in very unique ways. Capture that special view by allowing them to tell the story. Give them the chance to use photographs, videos, and audio recordings to create projects that will combine art and history, as well as reinforce reading, language arts, and research and technology skills”.

**Slide 27**: In the K-12 learning environment, digital story telling is used in many ways. Two examples include promoting writing with fourth and fifth grade students, “[Project Place](http://www.infotoday.com/MMSchools/jan02/banaszewski.htm)” (Banaszwenski, 2002) and promoting “oral language development through reflective self-learning (RSL) in seven-year-old children” (Valkanova & Watts, 2007, p. 793).

**Slide 28**: Students in the K-12 environment reap many benefits from using this innovation in the classroom. They learn a method of self expression through digital storytelling, increase their writing skills, increase their self-confidence as well as develop their digital technology skills. Each of these benefits prepares them as 21st century learners to be life-long learners.

**Slide 29**: Beyond the K-12 environment, digital storytelling is being implemented in college environments. Some collegiate goals are to assist faculty in facilitating “various learning styles and connect to students’ interest in technology” (Educause, 2007, p. 1).

Digital Storytelling would be used “to develop their [students] ability to appropriately evaluate and use online content and electronic tools as a means of personal expression” (p. 1).

**Slide 30**: In addition, in the collegiate environment digital storytelling continues to provide many benefits for students. “Digital stories can be instructional, persuasive, historical, or reflective” (Educause, 2007, p. 1). “Digital stories give students an opportunity to experiment with self-representation—telling a story that highlights specific characteristics or events—a key part of establishing their identity, a process that for many is an important aspect of the college years” (p.2).

**Slide 31**: We have explored the beginning of Digital Storytelling with founder Dana Atchley and Joe Lambert, who joined and created the Center for Digital Storytelling. They believed in the art of storytelling and so should we!

As previously described, digital storytelling has many benefits in the educational environment from increasing writing skills to developing self expression using technology. As educators, we must implement strategies to assist our students in increasing skills and knowledge.

We need to embrace digital storytelling so we can prepare our 21st century learners for the future in technology and self expression, which will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

**Slide 32:** I want to leave you with this image: A student uses digital storytelling to retell the story *The Very Last of the Great Whangdoodles* by Julie Andrews. She tells this story in her own words and shares illustrations in the way she sees it . . . Enjoy!

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Web Resources

* [Center for Digital Story Telling](http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html)
* <http://www.nextexit.com/nextexit/nextframeset.html>
* <http://www.storycenter.org/cookbook.html>
* <http://electronicportfolios.org/digistory/>
* <http://www.apple.com/ilife/imovie/>
* <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.mspx>
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* <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/learnshops/digital/examples.php>